

# TRICARE Europe

## Release

*"Your passport to quality health"*

Phone: (DSN) 496-6315 (Comm.) 06302-67-6315

International: 00-49-6302-67-6315

Email: teopao@europe.tricare.osd.mil

Web: www.europe.tricare.osd.mil

Release Number: 03-24

Date: October 30, 2003

Contact: Troy Kitch

### **Attention TRICARE *Standard* Beneficiaries: Inpatient Non-Availability Statement Requirement to End in December**

Military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) in Europe will no longer issue nonavailability statements (NAS) to TRICARE Standard beneficiaries for non-emergency inpatient care after Dec. 28, 2003. This procedural change, mandated by Congress, means that Standard beneficiaries will no longer require an NAS prior to seeking most types of civilian inpatient care.

"Inpatient" care is defined as care in which a patient is required to remain in a hospital or clinic for a period of more than 23 hours. An NAS is a document issued by MTF officials to a Standard beneficiary that certifies that a specific medical service is not available within the MTF at the time the care is needed. If an MTF cannot provide the inpatient care, the NAS authorizes a patient to receive care from a civilian source. This change in procedure means that Standard beneficiaries may receive most types of civilian inpatient care without prior authorization or documentation from an MTF.

In Europe, only TRICARE Standard beneficiaries will be affected by this change. TRICARE Prime beneficiaries will still require referral and authorization from their Primary Care Manager prior to seeking any non-emergency civilian care.

#### **TRICARE Standard Patients Still Require NAS for Mental Health**

An exception to this change in procedure is for mental health care. Standard beneficiaries who seek mental health care will *still require a NAS* from their servicing MTF after Dec. 28 before visiting a civilian provider for inpatient care. This will ensure proper reimbursement from TRICARE.

-MORE-

## **Preauthorization for Certain Categories of Care is Still Required**

*All* beneficiaries seeking cosmetic, plastic, reconstructive, or morbid obesity surgeries or treatments must contact their local TRICARE Service Center *before* a civilian provider performs any procedure. TRICARE coverage for these types of surgeries or treatments is very limited. The preauthorization requirement is a separate program from the NAS that ensures that treatments sought by beneficiaries will be covered by TRICARE.

While TRICARE covers the vast majority of medical services, it is always wise for beneficiaries to check with their local TRICARE Service Center (TSC) staff prior to *any* inpatient or outpatient procedure. TSC counselors can verify coverage for a given procedure and advise beneficiaries about potential out-of-pocket costs for non-covered procedures.

## **Maternity Care — A Special Case**

Standard beneficiaries who require maternity care must ensure they receive an NAS from their servicing MTF if they receive *any* civilian prenatal care prior to Dec. 28. In this situation, patients require an NAS for outpatient care because the military health system groups outpatient and inpatient maternity care together to ensure continuity of care.

Note that nonavailability statements issued overseas are not valid in the Continental U.S. and vice-versa. This means that if a Standard beneficiary moves to a new TRICARE region, a new maternity NAS must be issued by a servicing MTF in that new region. Standard beneficiaries who require maternity care prior to Dec. 28 are urged to contact their servicing MTF or nearest TRICARE Service Center for assistance to avoid claim problems.

Patients who seek maternity care after Dec. 28 do not need a NAS and may seek care with any civilian provider in the TRICARE network (patients may face out-of-pocket costs if they choose a provider outside of the TRICARE network). TSC counselors remain available to help patients choose the best possible care options.

## **Summary**

While the NAS is an important document prior to Dec. 28, TRICARE Standard beneficiaries will no longer be required to obtain this document for most types of civilian inpatient care after this date. With the elimination of the NAS, TRICARE Standard beneficiaries will enjoy greater choice in where they receive their care. For more information, beneficiaries may call or visit their local MTF or contact their servicing TSC. TSC and MTF contact information is available online at

[www.europe.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.europe.tricare.osd.mil).